Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Questions on Subject and Purpose**

1. What does the title “Mother Tongue” suggest?
2. List the different Englishes Tan describes, defining each.
3. Of her mother’s English, Tan writes, “That was the language that helped shape the way I saw things, expressed things, made sense of the world” (par.7). How was the effect of her mother’s English positive, and how was it negative?

**Questions on Strategy and Audience**

1. In paragraph 6, Tan quotes part of one of her mother’s conversations. Why?
2. After paragraphs 7 and 17, Tan uses additional space to indicate divisions in her essay. Why does she divide the essay into three parts?
3. Tan notes in paragraph 21 that she thinks of her mother as her audience when she writes stories. Why?

**Questions on Vocabulary and Style**

1. How would you characterize Tan’s tone in the essay?
2. In paragraph 20, Tan quotes a “terrible line” she once wrote: “That was my mental quandary in its nascent state.” What is so terrible about that line?
3. Define the following words:
4. belies
5. empirical
6. benign
7. insular
8. semantic
9. hone
10. quandary
11. nascent

**For Group Discussion and Writing (Discuss the question with the group and then summarize a paragraph response together.)**

What makes up your “mother tongue”? To what extent is your language (such things as word choice, pronunciation, dialect, and second-language skills) influenced by your parents, your education, the part of the country in which you grew up, and your peers? Start by making a series of notes together. Then, define your “mother tongue.” Try to define the influences that have shaped both how and what you say.

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